TAFT TALK

No. 60 *Newsletter of the Taft Family Association* Jun 2011

"I'll Toss You" ... the story of master hobs and President William Howard Taft

A recent letter came from Donald E. Hill of Clarkesville, GA concerning the 1908 Presidential election between William Howard Taft and William Jennings Bryan. He has the original Super Master Hobs that were used to make the "flipper" button (each is approx. 1-1/2 inch across the top and approx. 2 inches long, see his photo above).

These hobs were made by the Scovill Manufacturing Co (later the Scovill Fasteners Inc), Waterbury, CT and used to make the political "flipper" button. One has the bust of W. H. Taft with the words "I'll Toss You." The other has the bust of W. J. Bryan with the words "I'll Match You." Donald, who worked for Scovill from 1957 until 1994, was given the hobs in 1990 from the General Manager, Charles F. LaFrano, who was unable to give him a regular bonus that year and gave him the hobs instead. (To put this in perspective his bonus for 1992 was almost $10,000). Mr. LaFrano mistakenly thought these were two wrestlers from that era.

Mr. Hill was at that time the purchasing manager for Scovill and had been foreman of the Tool & Die Department for 13 years. "In that capacity he was responsible for taking the Super Master Hobs and making a set of master hobs. These would then be used to make a set of 'peg and followers'" which would be installed into a 45 ton press to produce metal buttons, like "Levi Strauss," "Wrangler," etc. Designs vary but a master die maker might spend 50 or more hours just to make the original."

Mr. Hill contacted us before placing them on ebay. Since we are not in a position to purchase items, we directed him to the William Howard Taft National Historic Site in Cincinnati, OH. They however are also not in a position to purchase the master hobs. We suspect Mr. Hill will now post them on ebay.

Thank you! The survey we sent out in the Dec 2010 TTT had a fantastic return.

Obviously not all our members responded to our survey, but over 50 did. Of those well more than half have been members for more than 10 years and ten admitted to belonging "forever." The newsletter, family connections, and research were the reasons people said they belonged. About half our cousins are interested in attending reunions, or would be if they were closer geographically or younger in age.

One honest person (and you know who you are) said he usually reads the newsletter; everyone else says they always do (and many thanks for those compliments added in the margins). It looks as though almost anything we can think to put in the newsletter pleases our readers, especially when it relates directly to Tafts. Comments ranged from wanting more photographs, to updates on overall research progress as well as more on specific lines. One person said she would like to see us publish the parents of George W. Taft of Boonville, NY but then noted she was kidding since she has been searching for them for thirty years – maybe next year!.

Remember if you answered "yes" to being interested in sending in information for the newsletter, we are waiting … and we know who you are. Seriously though if you do see articles on Tafts (even if you don't know who they are) or vital records or gravestones, let us know. It will probably make someone's day.

Nearly 75% of cousins are still interested in a five or six generation book on the family, preferably in softcover and less than $50 per book. It's possible we might be able to set something through the internet that would allow individuals to download their own book. Obviously one can download works now but they don't necessarily look like the books you are used to. To be honest, in order to make that a reality at this point, we need some new researchers – we have been hit hard in the last few years with the loss of truly stellar and hard-working folks like Bert Smith and Dick Messinger.

Even cousins who don't have internet capabilities (or interest) think a Taft Family website is the correct way to go. Of the responders to this survey more than 87% are online; however, an overwhelming percentage of those would still rather receive their newsletters in hard copy.

Again it was most revealing to find that most cousins think we should hire a webmaster, many thought we should hire a Taft family researcher, and almost everyone was willing to pay higher dues to cover the costs for a webmaster. The reasonable caveat was the question of "how much are we talking about here?"

The survey results bring us to the next phase. I have made contact with a local website company and will be sitting down with them at some point to discuss various options and costs. This particular person would probably be willing to set up a website for us to use and to train us on it, but he has no interest in maintaining websites. At least he can give us direction and a sense of cost. If you have seen websites for family organizations that you think work really well, please email me (patallen7@verizon.net) so I will have some examples. We of course have our current website, courtesy of David W. Taft, but he has indicated that it is not his life-long ambition to manage a complete Taft website.

The lineage portion of the survey was filled in by 51 people, some of whom have multiple lines of course. Counting only the primary line, Benjamin had 19 descendants, Robert 10, Joseph 7, Daniel 6, Thomas 3, Matthew 4, and two people who can't connect their Taft yet (how frustrating to know there's definitely a connection, but you just can't quite grab it!).

THOMAS: Donald E Williams, David N Taft, Charlotte Haase; all three through Robt, Thos, Thos.
MATTHEW: Robt D Taft, Dawn Barber, Alvin Taft, Wendy Cadieux; Two through Matt, James, Eben.
DANIEL: Norma Winters, Priscilla Alvord, Cynthia Piehler, Clint Taft, Ray Taft, Howard W. Taft; Four through Robt, Daniel, Caleb; the other two Robt, Daniel, Daniel.
JOSEPH: Jeffrey Taft, Paul Cooper, Margo Stever, Dudley Titus, S Tucker Taft, Mary Jane Burdett, Marilyn Labbe; Two through Robt, Joseph, Aaron, three through Robt, Joseph, Peter.
ROBERT: William Older, Donald E Taft, Barbara R Smith, Beth Klumb, Barbara G Smith, Douglas Wood, Shirley Renaud, Elizabeth Taft, Connie Roe; four through Robt, Robt, Israel; four through Robt, Robt, Robt .
BENJAMIN: Pat Allen, Carol Peterson, Eugene Seelye, Louise Plumley, Thomas Bowen, Robert Grossman, Betty Carr, Marsden Champaign, Esther Wilbur, Linda Newberry, Barbara Harrington, Margaret Barton, Neil Todd, Jo Lynn Snead, Sally Gagne, Patricia Bates, Earl Boughton, Barbara Hoyes, Roland D. Neiss, Jr. ; ten through Robt, Benj, Mijamin; seven through Robt, Benj, Stephen.
UNKNOWN: Becky Grothe, Becky Nelson.

Respondents were from CA, CT, FL, IA, IN, KY, LA, MA, MD, ME, MI, MO, NC, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OH, OK, PA, RI, SC, TX, VA, WA, WI, CAN, AE (our diplomat now back in the US)

Joe Taft and his Wild Kingdom

"Joe Taft wants his bedroom back. For four months it's been inhabited by a baby tiger named Max, while Taft, who's 60, crashes on the couch…" so begins an article in the "Chicago Reader." We don't know yet how Joe Taft is related, but he certainly leads a unique lifestyle.

Joe Taft was raised in CO, did undergraduate studies in philosophy at Indiana State University and serendipitously became hooked on a pet ocelot. He moved to Chimayo, NM and ran a construction company, but dreamed of creating an animal rescue center. He is unmarried and has no children, "at least none that are bipeds."

Joe Taft has achieved his dream and is the director of the Exotic Feline Rescue Center (EFRC) in Center Point, IN which provides homes for large cats – tigers, lions etc..

Most of the animals come from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and DNR who have saved them from abuse and neglect.

In operation since 1991 the EFRC, federally licensed by the USDA, is now home to 200 cats on 110 acres and has over 7,000 visitors a year. The facility has 11 full-time and 2 part-time staffers and a yearly budget of $375,000. Besides visitors' fees, they rely on fund-raisers and donations. Local farmers provide most of the cat food, even though the cats go through 3,000 pounds of meat per day. Vet costs are about $15,000 per year. Joe's skills in construction are essential to keeping the facility well-maintained. Although the animals are fenced and secured, the center is noted for the space and natural habitat provided. Concerned about the health and safety of big cats Joe and his staff spend a great deal of time educating the public by giving lectures and presentations.

Taft, who frequently accompanies US officials on rescue missions "thinks the main reason cats wind up being mistreated is that people have unrealistic expectations about what owning them entails. 'People that get these animals don't realize how big they are,' he says, 'how aggressive they are, and don't realize the kind of care or food it takes to feed them.'"

(Article in the Chicago Reader by Gretchen Kalwinski; photo by Paul L. Merideth)

In Memoriam

Herman B. DeVries

Our deepest sympathies go to our long-time secretary-treasurer and close cousin, Berneta DeVries, on the recent passing of her husband, Herm DeVries. Ever patient and a pleasure to be with, Herm will be greatly missed by your editor and many others.

Herman B. DeVries, 89, of Mendon, MA died 17 May 2011 at home. He was born 2 Jul 1921 in Northbridge, MA, the son of Broer and Nessie (Yongsma) DeVries. He graduated from Douglas Memorial High School and attended the Worcester Boys Trade School. During World War II he served for three years in the US Coast Guard.

Herm DeVries was employed as a Machinist for George J. Meyers Manufacturing Company in West Boylston for 30 years until his retirement in 1985. He had previously been employed for many years at the former Whitin Machine Works in Whitinsville. Herm was a longtime member of the Mendon First Parish (Unitarian).

Herm and Berneta (Lowell) DeVries observed their 36th wedding anniversary on 18 Oct 2010.

In addition to his wife, Berneta, Herm is survived by one son Barry A. and his wife Nancy DeVries of Redlands, CA, one daughter Linda A. Baker of Nashua, NH, one brother Burton W. DeVries of E. Woodstock, CT, two grandchildren: Joshua DeVries and Jonathon DeVries; and several nieces and nephews. He was pre-deceased by one brother Paul Y. DeVries and one sister Helen B. Taylor.

(sources: obituary from "Northbridge Times.")

News Again From Couderpsort, PA

Over the years one of our most dedicated and intrepid cousins has been Louise Taft Plumley of Coudersport, PA. For many years they supported a Taft Family Reunion in the north-central area of PA and sent on all the family lore – an invaluable source of information for us. In her most recent letter, Louise writes:

"It has been awhile since I have written. My husband Bob has been sick, he can't do what he used to do as he is 84 years old. He had a heart attack in 2008. But he can make home made bread. He has home health, the Veterans, and PT and PA come to the house - give B-12 shots and draw blood. So he doesn't have to get out for those.

"Our daughter Sharon is now working at a nursing home here in Coudersport as a nurse's aide. She is here almost every day to see if we need something before going to work.

"I am doing OK. I celebrated my 80th birthday 9 Nov 2010. I sure have been busy with all the snow we have gotten with Bob not able to do the shoveling. Bob and I celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary 2 Feb 2011.

"Last year 2010 I lost my Aunt Mary Taft Kitchen, the last of my Dad's (Walton Taft) family. Aunt Mary was born 9 Dec 192 and died 2 Apr 2010. She leaves three children, six grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

"My brother Milton Taft doesn't get out much, he is 85 years old now."

Louise and Milton Taft were the children of Walton Otto (Charles Enos, Charles H., Laban, Jesse, Mijamin Mowry, Nathan, Mijamin, Benjamin, Robert) Taft.

A Question about Abigail Holbrook

Char Haase of Waunakee, WI asks about Abigail Holbrook who married Nathaniel Taft: Which one is she?

According to the internet Abigail Holbrook was born 12 Aug 1731 the daughter of Benjamin and Abigail (Benson) Holbrook. According to the Taft Family Association Abigail Holbrook was born 14 Mar 1752 the daughter of Samuel and Lydia (Staples) Holbrook. So which is right?

Nathaniel Taft was born 15 Oct 1747 in Mendon, MA (VR 175) the son of Thomas and Lydia (Thompson) Taft, and died 12 Aug 1827 in Mendon, MA (VR 502). His wife Abigail Taft died 30 Oct 1826 in Mendon, MA aged 77 yrs (VR 500, gr 19) Thus she was born in 1749. This would make her the Abigail "Nabby" Holbrook born 15 Aug 1749 in Mendon, MA (VR 99), the daughter of Benjamin and Abigail (Benson) Holbrook. We are not sure where the date of 12 Aug 1731 above comes from.

Nathaniel Taft was the son of Thomas (Thomas, Robert) Taft.

We would love to hear from you – photos, stories, you name it, we are interested.

And better yet how about writing an article for this newsletter – no financial reward but lots of good will!

Another project!

We have started an every-name index for the Taft Tree Talk beginning with 1981 (TTT #1). This spreadsheet index contains the volume, date and page of the issue, every name (only listed once per page), the article, the dates of birth/death and parents of the individual where known, and the brother from whom the person is descended.

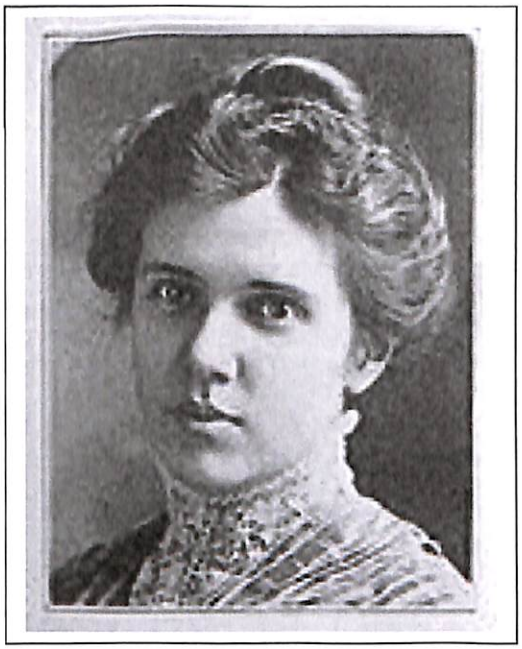
To date 31 issues have been indexed. In addition we have been adding the full text of the information from the TTTs into the various GEDCOM files where possible.

Eventually when this is finished, we will then go through the file cabinets which contain Dick Messinger's accumulated correspondence with family members and make sure that has been added to the GEDCOMs as well.

This has taken about four months so far and obviously will take much longer, although the every-name index itself ought to be done by September. We will also then do the same for the newsletters from the California Taft Family Association which Tom Collins worked so diligently on in the 1960s and early 1970s.

In doing this work it has been amazing to see how many stalwart and devoted cousins we have. Many who are members have been with us since the beginning and have over the course of many years sent in invaluable family data.

Dr. Julia Jessie "Jessie" Taft:
Early authority on child placement and therapeutic adoption



Jessie Taft, ae 26 in 1908 (en.wikipedia.org)

J. Jessie Taft was educated at Drake University, BA and the University of Chicago, PhD. Her doctoral thesis entitled "The Woman Movement from the Point of Social Consciousness" was dated 1913. Jessie worked for three years at the Bedford Hills Reformatory for Women in NYC as the Asst. Superintendent and then became the director of the Seibert Institution's Child Study Dept. of the Children's Aid Society in PA. Her work at the University of Pennsylvania began in 1929 when she became the director of their new School of Social Work (the first in the US to have an advanced curriculum focused on social work). Jessie Taft wrote many papers and lectured often on women's issues as well as diagnostic techniques she had pioneered for dealing with institutionalized children.

Virginia Robinson wrote of Taft "'The discovery of the use of function in helping processes, the most significant and influential concept in the development of theory and practice in the Pennsylvania School of Social Work, remains Dr. Taft's most significant and enduring contribution to theory and practice in social casework... Taft played a major role in the controversy that developed in social work education between the Rankian "functional" approach and the Freudian "diagnostic" approach."

Jessie Taft is perhaps best known for her work as a translator and biographer of Otto Rank, an "outcast disciple of Sigmund Freud." She first met Rank as a patient, then as a student and friend. She "was interested in psychoanalysis as a further training measure for myself in the future and I wanted to see who these analysts were..." She then arranged for analysis by him which took place in New York in the fall of 1926. Her motivation "... was not due to any conscious personal need nor the lack of professional success, but to the deep awareness of being stopped in professional development.... Psychological testing of children was useful but, as I knew only too well, it was not therapeutic." When Rank introduced his novel idea of "conscious will" to explain human behavior rather than the subconscious as propounded by Freud, she accepted that as well. Her steadfast support for Rank resulted in his papers being given to her after his death in 1939. In 1950 she retired to devote her time to organizing Ranks' papers and to writing his biography, published in 1958.

She and her life-long colleague and partner, Virginia P. Robinson, adopted two children: Everett Hastings in 1921, the son of Milo Hastings, and Martha Scott in 1923, whom they raised at their home, "The Pocket", so named because "they had to dig deeply into their pockets to purchase the property." Virginia Robinson wrote a biography of the professional life of Taft after Jessie's death, which was published in 1962.

Julia Jessie Taft was born 24 Jun 1882 in Dubuque Co., IA, and died 7 Jun 1960 in Philadelphia, PA, the daughter of Amanda May Farwell and Charles Chester (Charles Edwin, Caleb, Josiah, Reuben, Joseph, Joseph, Robert) Taft.

(sources: en.wikipedia.org; The Biographical Dictionary of Women in Science: Pioneering Lives from Ancient Times to the Mid-20th Century, vol 2; Women of History online)

Your Editor wants you to know....

The TTT survey was rewarding in itself, but the best result of all was the information people sent. Look for our next newsletters:

Rosemary (Taft) McLaren sent an article on Dr. Wiliam Howard "Bill" Taft;
Barbara Reisenauer Smith brings up an interesting question about the wife of Robert Taft (1729-1810);
Linda Rae (Savage) Newberry has much information to share;
Barbara G. Smith has sent her DAR application forms;
Shirley May (Worrall) Renaud needs a newsletter just for her family!

Check out this website by cousins Margo L. (Taft) Stever and her son James Taft Stever!

New member, Margo Stevers, writes that Hope Taft told her about the Taft Family Association. Her son James Taft Stever has "done a a great deal of genealogical research, and we have both written a book with a Chinese professor, Hong Shen, of Zhejiang University, on William Howard Taft and the 1905 U.S. diplomatic mission to Asia. We have also created an exhibition and website on the 1905 mission: www.ohiohistory.org/tafttrip."

Margo is listed as the project director and is an award-winning poet and arts administrator who has published several books of poetry, articles and reviews. In addition Margo founded the Hudson Valley Writers' Center and is the founding editor of the Slapering Hol Press. She is interested in other Tafts who are writers. (editor's note: see p 5 for Dr. Julia Jessie Taft and a future article on Adella R. MacArthur Taft).

James Taft Stever is listed as the project creator and assistant in exhibition design. He graduated from Hampshire College, his thesis on the US expansionism in the Philippines, and obtained a Masters in History from Brown University.

James Taft Stever is the son of Margo L. (Taft) Stever. Margo L. Taft is the daughter of Katherine Longworth Whitaker and David Gibson Taft (William Hulbert Sr, Peter Rawson, Alphonso, Peter Rawson, Aaron, Peter, Joseph, Robert) Taft and "William Howard Taft is my great half uncle."

In Memoriam

Martha "Marti" (Taft) Gorham

Neil Todd, Berneta DeVries and I were very saddened to learn of Marti's death. In all the reunions over the years Marti was a loyal and fervent attendee and a close friend to many of those who worked so hard on those events.

Martha "Marti" (Taft) Gorham, 92, of Winona Shores, died 9 Nov 2010 at Lakes Region General Hospital in Laconia, NH. She was born 13 Jun 1918 in Binghamton, NY, the daughter of Carl and Mabel (Taft) Whitaker. Marti graduated from Binghamton High School and SUNY Cortland, class of 1940. Marti taught middle school Physical Education and Health Education in Binghamton, for two years, before moving to Laredo, TX. After twenty-eight years residing in many areas of this country and abroad, she and her husband spent a year in Burlington, VT then moved to Meredith, NH in 1971.

Marti was employed by Annalee Dolls for eleven years in retail and was the gift shop manager for part of the time. She was past president of the Meredith Community Garden Club, Vice President and co-President of the Center Harbor Women's Club, a member of the First Congregational Church of Meredith, active in Military Wives Clubs, a member of the Military Officers Association, NH and Venice, FL Chapters and the NH Aviation Association.

Marti was a former tennis tournament player and was a fan of many sports. Her main interest was writing. She wrote "Carpets of Clover", an Air Force pilot's story, published in 2000, and her latest book, "From the Heart", currently at the publishers, is a book of over thirty poems.

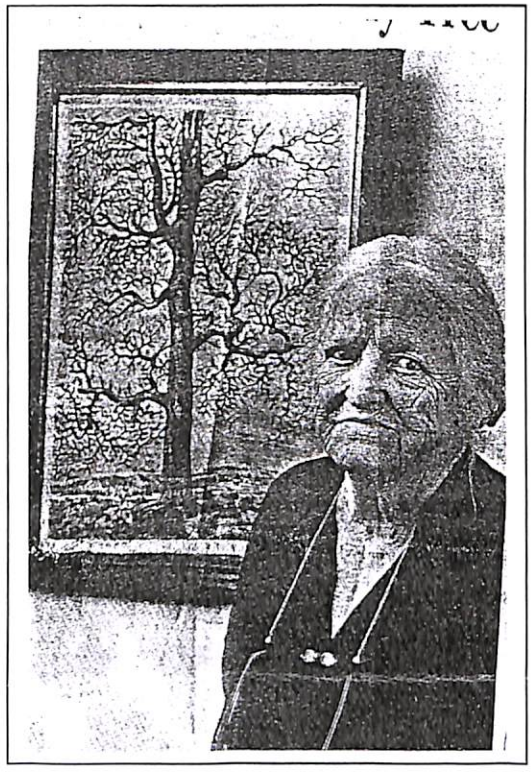
She was predeceased by her husband, Lt. Col. Robert M. Gorham, USAF Ret., who died in June of 1995. Marti is survived by her sons, Brett C. Gorham and his wife Allison of Watertown, NY; William W. Gorham and his wife Pattie of Bellevue, NE; Peter C. Gorham and his wife Cile of Charlottesville, VA; six grandchildren, J.R., Vance, Andy, Tim,. Seth, and Todd and step grandson Andrew, niece, Patricia Cluck of Binghamton, NY and nephew Dr. Richard Ingwall of Borrego Spring, CA.

Martha Taft "Marti" Gorham was the daughter of Mabel Taft (Martin DeForest, Asa Perry, Asa, Asa, Silas, Stephen, Benjamin, Robert) Taft.

(Source: Binghamton Press and Sun-Bulletin 12 Nov 2010)

Taft Family Trees in California

Cousin Elizabeth "Liza" Taft of Palo Alto, CA sent a newspaper article by Jane Nolan (dated about 1971, probably the Palo Alto paper) about Edith Taft Harmon and her family tree. It probably looks familiar to many of you since there are quite a few black and white images and a couple of colored ones that we have seen over the years.



(Photo: same newspaper article, no attribution available)

Edith Taft Harmon was 83 when the article was written. She inherited the tree from her father, Ralph Taft. The tree is about two feet by three feet. Some of the last names added to the tree were dated 1857 including her grandfather, Azariah Taft. When the article was written Mrs Harmon had begun a new tree that started with her grandfather – wouldn't we love to see that one.

She stated: "'My father helped me list all the cousins who are in the East. My father knew all these people (in the Taft family); he traveled a lot,' she said. Her father, a spice importer in New York, had an office on the same street as did Thomas A. Edison and John D. Rockefeller… At one time she recalled he took care of a blind writer who was writing a book about New England and wanted to use some of the names from the tree."

Two of her favorite names were Penina and Azariah. Other old Taft names include: Erasmus, Caleb, Patience, Jerusha, Preserved and Experience.

Liza notes her brother has a tree too and she has a CD with a copy on it. We would love to have a copy of that, Liza.

Edith Isabel Taft married 19 Sep 1911 Col. Kenneth Bailey Harmon. She was born 21 Aug 1888 in NJ, the daughter of Emily Ludlow Covel and Alfred Azariah "Ralph" (Azariah Horton, Jonathan, Daniel, Daniel, Daniel, Robert) Taft.

Tafts from Windham County, CT news clippings

Long-standing Cousin and historian, Marilyn Labbe, besides all her work in the Historical Society, has been poring over the "Windham County Transcript" for 1906 and has sent us a few tidbits on Tafts:

Windham County Transcript 31 May 1906 page 6 col. 1 Attawaugan
"Benj. I. Taft is able to be at his work again in the machine shop, after several weeks of being laid up with an injured hand."

Benjamin Ingalls Taft (Jun 1850 RI – aft 1930 prob Providence, RI) was the son of Lyman Arnold (Henry, Seth, Stephen, Benjamin, Robert) Taft. He and his wife Ellen M. "Nellie" Newman had seven children.

Windham County Transcript 21 June 1906
"Dwight C. Brown age 78y 10m, died in Danielson the 15 June 1906, and he left a widow and a sister, **Mrs. Lydia Taft** in Danielson."

Lydia Ann Smith (1843 Killingly, CT – 26 Dec 1913 Danielson, CT) was the daughter of Russell Smith and Lydia (--) Brown. She married 28 Sep 1858 in Northbridge, MA (MAVR 119.183) Lowell Taft (5 Aug 1837 Northbridge, MA (VR 80) - 1891 CT), the son of Josiah and Hannah (Benson) Taft. They were divorced in 1882. Dwight C. Brown (11 Jul 1827 – 15 Jun 1906 Danielson, CT) was the half-brother of Lydia Ann Smith and the son of Richard Brown and Lydia (--) who married second Russell Smith. He married Jennie M. Holley (1840 – 20 May 1908).

(sources: 1850, 1900 US Censuses for Danielson/Killingly, CT; Find A Grave #36769762, 36769775 Westfield Cemetery, Danielson, CT)

If your label reads 2008, you will no longer receive this newsletter. Please contact our treasurer right away, so you don't miss the next newsletter. Thank you.

Recent communications from cousins in response to the survey:

Claudine Taft-Kitts of Cleburne, TX informs us that she is "hoping I'll have to move no more. Too old for all those boxes that have to be filled and reopened and put away." We know what you mean!

Donald E Williams of Wooster, OH says "Mr Messinger reviewed my lines a number of years ago. What a tangled web of inter-relationships through Chapin, Spring and Fletcher! My grandfather Williams goes back through the Leach family to 6 Mayflower families. Do any of the early Taft marriages go back to the Mayflower?"

Charles F. Davis of Concord, MA responds: "I really appreciate the news letter and would hope that there be another family reunion one of these years."

Roy Lee Henry of Uxbridge, MA writes: "I hope everyone is doing well. I'm writing in regards to my Father's side of the family, and the connection to the Taft family. My father's mother was a Lee of the Lees of Douglas, MA and of native Americans from there. My father's great grandfather's grandmother was native American of Nipmuc. The Taft connection is from William Welcome Lee of Douglas who married Louisa Taft on 15 May 1836 in Uxbridge. She was the daughter of Frederick Taft and Sarah. The other connection is Ephraim Lee married Abagail Taft on 17 Jun 1813. I do have another little story pertaining to Tafts. There is a Civil War veteran buried in Prospect Cemetery in Uxbridge whose name is General Putnam Taft. A few times while placing flags on Memorial Day I was asked by people if he was a general in the Union Army and I replied no for that is his actual name. He was a pvt in Co K 51st Mass Inf. Reg. He was a farmer from Mendon and enlisted on 29 Aug 1862 and was discharged on 8 Feb 1863 for disability at Foster General Hospital in New Bern, NC. "

In Memoriam

Virginia Norma (Chase) Carr

We have received word of the loss of another cousin, Virginia Carr, and send our sincere regrets to her daughter Joyce Donaher and family.

Virginia Carr passed away Sunday 13 Dec 2009 after a period of failing health. She was the daughter of the late Chester Albertus and Alice (Beattie) Chase. Virginia has two daughters, Joyce A Donaher and her husband James of Lakeville, MA and Susan M Warren and her husband Larry of Boise, ID; two sisters: Alice T Gardiner of Warwick, Patricia Ferguson and her husband Robert of Pascoag; a brother Chester A Chase Jr of Smyrna, TN; four grandchildren: James E Donaher, III, Michael T Donaher and his wife Amanda, Misty Gamez, and Justin Ychnitz; two great grandsons and several nieces and nephews.

Virginia Carr (center) along with her sisters, Alice (Chase) Gardiner (right) and Patricia (Chase) Ferguson enjoyed our reunions and reading the newsletters according to Virginia's daughter Joyce Donaher.

Virginia was raised in Providence but enjoyed spending time in Esmond with her grandparents who often referred to her as being a little bit country and a city girl. She graduated from Mt. Pleasant High School and attended cosmetology school, becoming a licensed hair dresser.

Virginia was a member of Mathewson Street United Methodist Church of Providence. Since her retirement she had enjoyed assisting with church functions. She enjoyed serving as a greeter, helping with Kids on Keyboards and the Labyrinth Walk.

Virginia's career was working in management positions for AAFES (Army and Air Force Exchange Service). She served at Homestead AFB, FL, Ft. Sumpter, SC; Ft Clayton Panama Canal Zone; San Luis Obispo, Sacramento, King City, CA. Her last assignment before retirement was at Almendorf AFB in Anchorage, Alaska. During her years since retirement Virginia resided in Smithfield. She also enjoyed many craft projects and had a great love of music.

Virginia Norma Chase was the daughter of Alice Taft Beattie (Ethel F. Taft, Benjamin Ingalls, Lyman Arnold, Henry, Seth, Stephen, Benjamin, Robert) Taft.

In Memoriam

Robert Watson Taft

(Photos from funeral card: Adams Funeral Home and Crematorium)

Cousin Barbara (Taft) Harrington sent us the obituary for her brother, Bob, with information on his life that reflects directly on so much that has become part of our national consciousness in the last few decades.

Robert Watson Taft was born 25 Jun 1947 in Minneapolis, MN, the son of Robert S. and Ann (Fredin) Taft, and died 5 Jan 2009 in Ames, IA ae 61/6/11. He was buried in the Iowa Veterans Cemetery, Van Meter, IA.

The family moved to Des Moines in 1958. Bob liked to play baseball, camp and hunt with his Dad. He became an Eagle Scout in Troop 51 at age 14. He graduated from Roosevelt High School in 1965 after enlisting in the Marines. He trained in San Diego and was soon shipped to Vietnam, where he served two tours of duty near the DMZ with the 3rd Recon Battalion. He participated in such campaigns as Operations Hastings, Pawnee, Chinnook II and Crockett. He received several medals, including a Purple Heart. He was honorably discharged as a sergeant in 1968.

Soldiers were not welcomed home in those days like they are today and he discovered how hard it was for him to leave his Marine brothers behind. In the early 1980s he organized and led a support group of veterans who also suffered from "war stress." Today we know this as PTSD, but this was not a recognized illness until long after he had been home. He had to fight hard to get the V.A. to help him.

Over the years, Bob worked at a wide variety of jobs from chauffer to restaurant owner. His favorite this last decade was as a self-proclaimed "Hermit Coach." He also studied philosophy at ISU, earning enough credits to graduate.

Bob had an unconventional sense of humor and was well-liked for his acerbic wit, generosity, distinctive hats and suspenders, and his old-fashioned manners. For every person who spit on him or called him "baby killer," he met many more who believed in him, appreciated his military service and tried to help him.

Family members left to celebrate his life are his son, Jamison Brosseau; brother and sisters: Dr. Art and Gigi Taft, Marion and David Brown; Barbara and Merrill Harrington, Marty Taft; his cherished nieces and nephews and his dog Tess.

And so, after all the perimeter checks and sleepless nights, Bob has gone to be with his platoon and finally, hopefully, rest in peace.

In Memoriam

Susan (Klaver) Piehler

Our sympathies to cousin Cynthia S. Piehler on the recent passing of her mother.

Susan Klaver Piehler, aged 78, of Summerfield, FL, formerly of Jackson, MI, went to be with her Lord on Tuesday, Dec 21, 2010. Susan Taft Klaver was born 5 Feb 1932 in Lansing, MI, the daughter of John Boer and Ethel (Taft) Klaver. She is survived by her husband, Waldermar Albert Piehler, Jr; children: Deb and Joe Russo of Grandville, Randall and Virginia Piehler of Brighton, and Cynthia Piehler of Wyoming; seven grandchildren; and a sister, Sally Taber of Rockford. According to her wishes, cremation has taken place. A Memorial Service was held this spring.

Susan Taft Klaver was the daughter of Ethel Taft (Levi Rawson, Austin Augustus, Amariah, Jotham, Caleb, Daniel, Robert) Taft.

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